Asia, Europe take advice from youth

HA NOI — Asian and European policy makers and youth leaders gathered in Ha Noi this week to inject new ideas into global issues of sustainable and peaceful development.

Hoang Binh Quan, member of the Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee, spoke at the opening session of the three-day fifth Asia-Europe Meeting Youth Dialogue on Tuesday.

He said that technology and the meeting of different cultures have created opportunities for youths to exchange values and ideas and better understand each other.

Quan, who is also the chairman of the National Committee for Youth of Viet Nam and President of Viet Nam Youth Union Central Committee, added that Asian and European youth face common challenges, such as terrorism, wars, race and religious conflicts, class conflicts, environment degradation, unemployment and social vices.

The youth event paves the way for the upcoming ASEM: Further Revitalising and Substantiating the Asia-Europe Partnership in October in Ha Noi. More than 60 participants and 26 ASEM members will address four aspects of sustainable development: society, the environment, the economy and institution building.

Zainal Arif Mantaha, director of people-to-people exchange for the Asia-Europe Foundation, said at the opening that the youth forum would contribute to the vision of the Founding Fathers of ASEM dialogue.

"As you are all aware, actions taken today will profoundly affect tomorrow. Or rather, I should say that the inaction of today's generation will have grave consequences for the generation of tomorrow," he said.

Le Van Bang, the Vietnamese deputy minister of Foreign Affairs added, "As this dialogue unfolds, we are witnessing important developments in the world and in our regions—both opportunities and challenges are linked."

"We share the common view that any strategy for sustainable development should ensure a balance of economic growth, social and cultural development, and environmental protection. The ultimate goal of sustainable development is to provide all citizens with the best material and intellectual life possible, and to build a civilised and just society."— VNS